



IN THIS ISSUE

VOLUME 1 NUMBER 48
APRIL 2, 2020

AUSA Seeks Waiver of Prescription Copays

4

Member Benefits

Tech Discounts, Online Classes

7



Chapter Highlights

Fires

Capital District of New York

9



Florida National Guard Spc. Joshua Henderson, a combat medic, right, collects a sample from a patient at a community-based test site near Marlins Park, Florida. (U.S. ARMY/SGT. MICHAEL BALTZ)

Army ramps up COVID-19 response

More than 17,000 retired soldiers have responded to a call from the Army seeking volunteers to join in the fight against the COVID-19 virus.

The call for volunteers is among several actions the Army is taking to protect troops and stop the spread of the virus.

They include identifying facilities across the country that can be converted into medical facilities, deploying hospital units to hard-hit cities such as New York City and Seattle, and mobilizing thousands of Army National Guard soldiers to help their local communities.

In a March 25 message to about 800,000 retirees, Lt. Gen. Thomas Seamands, Army deputy chief of staff for personnel, called for volunteers in several medical specialties, including family nurse practitioner, critical care nursing, emergency nursing, nurse

anesthetist, generalist nurse and respiratory specialist.

More than 9,000 former soldiers responded within the first 24 hours.

The total has topped 17,000 in the days since.

“Army health care providers are heroes in the fight against COVID-19,” an Army spokesman said. “We need the help of many of our retired or recently separated medical professionals. They possess the valuable talents, skills, training and education necessary to win this fight, so we’re asking our ‘Soldier for Life’ family to once

again answer the call to duty and re-join our ranks for this noble cause.”

Respondents included soldiers who did not serve in a medical specialty but earned nursing licenses or other certifications after leaving the Army.

Human resources professionals will continue vetting and reaching out to respondents, officials said.

On March 29, the Army also sent messages to thousands of Individual Ready Reserve soldiers asking for volunteers to help fight the spread of COVID-19.

See **Coronavirus**, Page 3

Membership terms extended to June 30

The Association of the U.S. Army is extending membership terms for all Individual and Community Partner members who are due to expire in March, April or May through June 30 at

no cost.

AUSA is taking this step as stay-at-home orders and restrictions on gatherings are impacting chapter membership efforts and businesses.

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Coronavirus*From Page 1***Engineers identify hospital sites**

The Army Corps of Engineers has identified 114 sites across the country it could retrofit to help local hospitals deal with patient overflow amid the COVID-19 outbreak, its commander said at a March 27 Pentagon press briefing.

“We have a very, very narrow window of opportunity,” Lt. Gen. Todd Semonite said. “If we don’t leverage that opportunity, we’re going to miss it.”

Army engineers helped build a 1,200-bed field hospital for non-COVID-19 patients inside the Javits Conference Center in Manhattan, New York, which opened Monday.

“The convention center model is a pretty good model,” Semonite said. “We can probably get a little bit more bang for the buck by going into the larger facilities.”

The corps plans to use the same model in other parts of the country.

In Chicago, Army engineers have started to work with their partners to place about 3,000 rooms inside the McCormick Place Convention Center for patients with the virus.

The project is planned to be completed by April 24 and will include self-contained halls that separate patients by the severity of their symptoms.

“I did not think we could meet the COVID standard in a massive building, but my engineers are telling me we think we’ve got the capability to do that,” Semonite said.

Guard mobilizations increase

More than 17,250 National Guard soldiers and airmen have been activated in all 54 states, territories and the District of Columbia to support local COVID-19 response efforts.

“COVID-19 is the most immediate threat facing our nation, and the virus knows no state boundaries,” said Air Force Gen. Joseph Lengyel, chief of the National Guard Bureau. “What the National Guard is doing in the states is part of a nationwide war on the coronavirus.”



New York Army National Guard soldiers demonstrate assembling a cot at the Javits Convention Center in New York City. (AIR NATIONAL GUARD/SENIOR AIRMAN SEAN MADDEN)

On March 27, Defense Secretary Mark Esper “modified and accelerated” the process for mobilizing Guard troops under Title 32 status.

This allows the governors to retain control over their troops while the federal government pays for the mission.

“This authorization enables your timely use of the National Guard to save lives,” Esper wrote in a letter to each governor.

“The people who study emergency response say the overall success and effectiveness of the response effort is better when under state control,” Lengyel said. “Governors and adjutants general know best how to apply the resources and people to fix the problem in their state.”

Reassuring the defense industry

The military also continues to work on minimizing the impact of the ongoing COVID-19 crisis on the companies that support the warfighter with critical equipment, products and services.

“Thank you for supporting our nation and the Army in this unprecedented time as we navigate through the COVID-19 emergency,” Bruce Jette, assistant Army secretary for acquisition, logistics and technology,

wrote in a March 24 letter addressed to the defense industrial base.

“I urge you all to maintain clear communications with our program and contracting offices regarding the challenges faced by this new environment,” he wrote.

Ellen Lord, undersecretary of defense for acquisition and sustainment, made similar remarks during a March 25 news briefing.

“I want to assure the American people that the United States military remains steady, remains ready, and capable of meeting all of our national security requirements,” she said.

Lord said her team has made “significant progress” in addressing concerns from defense industry leaders.

This includes making sure critical defense contractors can continue working even as more and more states call for businesses to shut down and people to stay home.

DoD also has issued a memo that guarantees continued payments to contractors, while the Pentagon is working with the Small Business Administration to protect DoD’s small business partners, Lord said.

For more information about the Army’s COVID-19 response, [click here](#).

AUSA seeks waiver of mail-order prescription copays during pandemic



There have already been disruptions in some pharmacy services due to pharmacy staff at some sites testing positive for the COVID-19 virus. (U.S. ARMY/LESLEY ATKINSON)

The Association of the U.S. Army has joined in an effort asking Congress to immediately waive Tricare copayments for mail-order prescriptions.

In a joint letter to Congress, AUSA and other military and veterans' groups say pharmacies at military treatment facilities are "high-traffic areas" that should be avoided during the global coronavirus pandemic, but the Tricare fee structure discourages beneficiaries from going elsewhere for their prescriptions.

"With patients coming to pharmacies to obtain refills of prescriptions amid the COVID-19 pandemic, MTF pharmacies are becoming even busier and more congested than normal," says a letter to congressional leaders.

"This is exactly the opposite of effective social distancing," the letter says, referring to health protection recommendations to keep about 6 feet from others to avoid spreading the virus.

Pharmacies at military treatment facilities are already adjusting their operations, with temporary measures that include alternative pickup solutions, such as curbside pickup; transfer of non-active-duty service members or family members to retail options or mail delivery; or closure of the pharmacy.

Tricare is encouraging beneficiaries to switch to home delivery, which can provide up to a 90-day supply of most medications, or a retail network pharmacy for prescription supplies of 14 days or less.

The Tricare pharmacy copayment structure, set by Congress, encourages the use of military pharmacies rather than mail order by its fee structure.

There is no copayment to fill prescriptions in person at the MTF pharmacy, while many beneficiaries pay between \$7 and \$60 for each medication filled through Tricare's mail-order pharmacy service.

There have already been disruptions in pharmacy services due to pharmacy staff at Redstone Arsenal, Alabama, and Fort Eustis, Virginia, testing positive for the COVID-19 virus.

"Congress should act now to protect active-duty service members, veterans, their eligible family member beneficiaries, and MTF staff by eliminating the TRICARE mail-order pharmacy copayment for the duration of the COVID-19 national emergency," says the letter to Congress.

Quick congressional action is unlikely. After several lawmakers tested positive for the virus, Congress went into recess until at least April 20.

AUSAExtra

*Voice for the Army –
Support For the Soldier*

Gen. Carter F. Ham, USA, Ret.
President and CEO, AUSA

Lt. Gen. Guy C. Swan III, USA, Ret.
Vice President, Education, AUSA

Luc Dunn
Editor

Desiree Hurlocker
Advertising Production and
Fulfillment Manager

Advertising Information Contact:
Fox Associates Inc.
116 W. Kinzie St. • Chicago, IL 60654
Phone: 800-440-0231
Email: adinfo.rmy@foxrep.com

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(U.S. Air National Guard photo/Master Sgt. John Hughe, 142nd Fighter Wing Public Affairs)

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(U.S. National Guard photo by Senior Master Sgt. Edward Snyder, 169th Fighter Wing, Public Affairs)



(U.S. Air Force Photo by Staff Sgt. Christopher Dyer)

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AUSA cancels Indo-Pacific conference, postpones events

LANPAC 2020, an international symposium and exhibition dedicated to land forces in the Indo-Pacific, has been canceled by the Association of the U.S. Army.

The three-day event in Honolulu had been scheduled to begin May 19. Registered exhibitors and attendees are being individually notified.

"This was a very difficult decision, particularly given the importance of the Indo-Pacific region to the United States Army, but it is the right decision given the circumstances," said retired Gen. Carter Ham, AUSA president and CEO.

"Nothing is more important right now than reducing the risk of exposure to the coronavirus," he continued. "We're thankful for the understanding of all of our members and exhibitors. And with the great support of Gen. Paul LaCamera and his team at U.S.



The Desmond T. Doss Health Clinic at Schofield Barracks, Hawaii is offering drive-thru testing for the novel coronavirus. (U.S. ARMY/DESMOND T. DOSS HEALTH CLINIC)

Army Pacific, we're already starting the planning for LANPAC 2021."

AUSA is also postponing other events scheduled for April and May.

Postponed events include an April 14 breakfast with Lt. Gen. Daniel Hokanson, director of the Army National Guard; an April 28 Rogers Strategic

Issues Forum with Gen. Mike Murray, commanding general of U.S. Army Futures Command; an April 30 Cyber+Networks Hot Topic; and a May 4 AI/Robotics Hot Topic. Efforts are underway to reschedule these events.

An updated AUSA meeting schedule can be found by clicking here.



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Discounts for technology, online classes, telemedicine

By Susan Rubel

With the COVID-19 virus still affecting our everyday activities, we know that many of you are working from home and spending much more time with digital entertainment.

As a member of the Association of the U.S. Army, remember that you receive discounts at Apple, Dell and HP.

Dell has created work-from-home bundles. Visit dell.com/mpp/ausa, which has been updated to make it easier to find these solutions.

Scroll to “Wherever work takes you, we’ll be there” and click on “View the Bundles.” This is Dell’s regular military discount page, but AUSA members, regardless of military service, can access these discounts.

Members get an additional 10% off these already discounted prices by emailing chris.pringle@dell.com.

Mention you’re an AUSA member, and he’ll email you a coupon.

You can always access your Hewlett Packard discount at www.ausea.org/hp and your Apple discount of 2%-10% at www.ausea.org/apple.

Apple retail stores are closed until further notice, but when they reopen, you can provide an Apple employee with AUSA’s name, and they will apply your discount.

AUSA staff members are working remotely, and we’re taking advantage of professional development opportunities during this time by taking

Member Benefits

classes at edX, a nonprofit created by MIT and Harvard to provide access to classes from top universities like Berkeley, Stanford, Georgetown University, Georgia Tech, Amazon Web Services, Microsoft and more.

Some of their more popular subjects are computer science, language, data science, business and management, engineering and humanities.

I’ve taken a contract law class from Harvard and an Excel and a PowerPoint class from Microsoft for free.



AUSA can help make telemedicine options available as part of our medical discounts program, which includes dental, vision, health advocacy and more. (U.S. ARMY/STACY SANNING)

If a class has a cost, or if you want to get a certificate showing you’ve completed or passed a course, use code `edxAUSA` to save 20%.

This also is a great time for your high school students to be studying for the SAT or ACT.

As a member, you get free comprehensive testing programs for just \$14.99 for the \$350 program or \$39.99 for the \$750 package. Visit www.ausea.org/eknowledge for more.

Don’t forget to apply for AUSA scholarships by clicking here. We’re awarding more than \$300,000 in scholarships, and the deadline to apply is May 15.

Many people are taking advantage of telemedicine options right now. If you don’t already have that as an option with your insurance provider, AUSA makes it available as part of our medical discounts program, which includes dental, vision, telemedicine, health advocacy and more.

Visit www.ausea.org/dma for full details and to enroll.

This current situation also reminds us of the challenges of becoming ill while traveling. AUSA’s program with Emergency Assistance Plus provides excellent protection for

just \$114 per year.

EA+ provides medical evacuation, medical assistance and help for companions, and transportation home.

Visit www.ausea.org/eap to learn more and to sign up.

Note that the information here outlines only some of the plan’s features.

Hospitalization (admitted as an inpatient) is a requirement to be eligible for some services.

All services must be arranged and provided by EA+.

You’ll receive a Member Guide, which you should read carefully to understand all the services available to you, as well as any rules and regulations.

While you are home more, there are many options for online retailer discounts, restaurant delivery discounts and much more through our Abenity member discount program at www.ausea.org/abenity.

You may access these and other discounts from your member savings page at www.ausea.org/savings.

Questions? Write me anytime at srubel@ausea.org.

Susan Rubel is AUSA’s Affinity Programs Director.

AUSA director leads webinar on child care, education

The Association of the U.S. Army's Family Readiness director led a panel of experts in a March 27 webinar focused on early child care and education during the novel coronavirus pandemic.

The event was part of the COVID-19 Military Support Initiative, launched by the Association of Defense Communities and Blue Star Families to provide resources and expertise to support communities, states and military families through the crisis.

"AUSA is proud to provide our members with timely information on COVID-19 from the Department of the Army and the Defense Health Agency," said Patty Barron, AUSA's director of Family Readiness.

There are 1.7 million military children in the active and reserve components, according to the latest Defense Department profile of the military community.

Nearly 40% of them are younger than six years old, Barron said, and



There are 1.7 million military children in the active and reserve components. Nearly 40% of them are younger than six years old, and more than 30% are ages 6-11. (U.S. ARMY PHOTO)

more than 30% are ages 6-11.

"Learning to keep children of such a wide variety of ages happy and healthy can be a difficult task," she said.

Representatives from Sesame Workshop, DoD and Zero To Three, a nonprofit focused on infant and tod-

dlar development, spoke about tips and resources for military families.

"I was so pleased with the participation, not only from the panelists, but from the audience," Barron said of the event, which had more than 1,000 people registered.

To listen to the webinar, click [here](#).

Honoring two Army veterans, longtime AUSA members

Retired Lt. Col. Fred Clifton "Clif" Berry Jr. and retired Sgt. Maj. George Willard Crawford, two longtime members of the Association of the U.S. Army, passed away in March.

Berry was 88, and Crawford was 93.

Berry was born on May 11, 1931, in Neponset, Illinois. Upon graduation from high school in 1948, he enlisted in the Air Force and served on the Berlin Airlift in an Aircraft Control and Warning Group.

In 1950, Berry entered the U.S. Military Academy at West Point, New York. He resigned from the academy in 1953 before volunteering for the draft in March 1954.

During basic training he reenlisted in the Army, requesting duty with the 82nd Airborne Division. His leaders encouraged him to seek a commis-



Left: Retired Lt. Col. Fred Clifton 'Clif' Berry Jr.
Right: Retired Sgt. Maj. George Willard Crawford

sion, and in July 1955 Berry was pinned with second lieutenant bars.

Throughout his military career, Berry served with, among others, the 7th Infantry Division in South Korea, the 3rd U.S. Infantry Regiment (The Old Guard), and the 196th Light Infantry Brigade during combat operations in the Vietnam War.

He retired in April 1975 to become the co-editor of *Armed Forces Journal* magazine and spent much of the next

two decades in editing roles throughout the defense writing domain.

Berry was a major supporter of AUSA's Book Program and the author of two AUSA books. He is the co-author of *Medics at War: Military Medicine from Colonial Times to the 21st Century*, and the author of *United States Army at War: 9/11 through Iraq*.

Crawford was born June 8, 1926, in Saint Paul, Arkansas, and he enlisted in the Army upon graduating from high school.

He was deployed to numerous locations overseas during his military career, serving during World War II, the Korean War, and the Vietnam War.

Crawford received numerous commendations including two awards of the Combat Infantryman Badge, the Legion of Merit and four Bronze Star Medals.

Chapter celebrates 50 years of service to community

After undergoing a period of revitalization and growing to nearly 1,000 members, the Association of the U.S. Army's Capital District of New York chapter is celebrating its 50th anniversary this year.

The chapter is dedicated to building the most professional and representative local chapter and providing

Capital District of New York

numerous professional development opportunities at a variety of events.

The chapter president, Sgt. 1st Class William Valenza, is a member of the New York National Guard and is currently deployed with the 42nd Infantry Division.

Locally, the chapter supports the Mohawk ROTC Battalion from Siena College and six JROTC units between Albany and Rochester, New York.



Members of AUSA's Capital District of New York chapter serve coffee during a March 7 wreath clean up at the Saratoga National Cemetery. (AUSA PHOTO)

It also sponsors several events throughout the year that recognize and give back to service members in the community.

They include the Stride Wounded

Warrior Snowfest Welcome Dinner, the U.S. Army and National Guard birthday receptions, and the "Flags In" project and Wreaths Across America at the Saratoga National Cemetery.

Soldier Family Council seeks to help homeless veterans

The Association of the U.S. Army's Fires chapter has partnered with other service organizations to create a Veterans Resource Center to help homeless veterans at Fort Sill, Oklahoma.

Representatives from the organizations make up the Soldier Family Council, formed nearly 10 years ago by Nate Slate, AUSA's 4th Region vice president-inform.

Fires

Slate wants the Lawton community, home to Fort Sill, to achieve "functional zero," which means homeless veterans can get immediate assistance as needed.

"If we can open that Veterans Resource Center, we can get to a point that on any given day, street-homeless veterans we find can get the care they need to get them off the street and keep them off the street," he said at a March 4 meeting of the council. "We need to be a functional zero city. It's an example we need to set."

Slate has worked with Jervis Jack-

son, director of the Southwest Oklahoma Continuum of Care, on an outreach campaign to identify homeless veterans.

The first "I Count" campaign identified 106 homeless veterans, Jackson said.

"The Veterans Resource Center will allow for us to take them off the street immediately," he said.

After being assigned to the center, each veteran will receive a Veterans Affairs Supportive Housing case manager.

"Then we have a plan for moving them into a permanent facility with a support structure that's going to allow for stability to prevent the likelihood they'll ever return to that place of homelessness," Jackson said.

In November 2018, Lawton Support Services, the lead agency of the Southwest Oklahoma Continuum of Care, acquired a three-year lease on the former Armed Services YMCA building that the council wants to turn into the Veterans Resource Cen-

ter, said retired Col. Glenn Waters, a lifetime member of AUSA.

On the council's first "Leap of Kindness Day" Feb. 29, more than 20 volunteers showed up to help convert the building into a functional Veterans Resource Center, he said.

"The last Saturday of each month, our intention is to bring volunteers in—hopefully some volunteers with some savvy on construction and maintenance-type skills—to come into the Veterans Resource Center, to help us start repairing what we can at our level, until we can raise the funds in upcoming months," Waters said.

Jackson also described the service delivery model they want to use in the Veterans Resource Center.

It is comprised of intake, outreach and assessment; building a housing inventory and a service resource inventory; and having a mechanism to bring all the different entities together.

"The Veterans Resource Center is the final piece," Jackson said. "It will allow us to get to that place."

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